

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1 - 18 are pending. Applicant cancels claims 2, 4, 11 and 14 without prejudice or disclaimer, amends claims 1, 3, 10 and 12, and adds new claim 19 - 23. No new matter has been added. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, with reference to Applicant's specification at page 10, line 5 through page 13, line 15.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 - 6, 9 - 15 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by German Patent No. DE 3105266 to Gauselman ("Gauselman"). Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0023714 to Asdale ("Asdale"). Claims 1 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,517,432 to Jaffe ("Jaffe").

As claims 2, 4, 11 and 14 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicant submits that the rejections as to claims 2, 4, 11 and 14 are moot. Applicant amends claims 1, 3, 10 and 12 to further clarify the nature of his invention, and respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1, 3, 5 - 10, 12, 13 and 15 - 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), (e).

In amended independent claim 1, for example, Applicant claims:

1. A game machine comprising:

a plurality of display regions;

a display module for displaying a plurality of symbols in each display region;

an evaluation module for evaluating whether a predetermined condition is met in a game based on a betting operation input by a player;

a selection module for determining a display region needed to change the number of symbols displayed; and

a display control module for changing a number of symbols being displayed in at least one of said display regions if the predetermined condition is met.

(Emphasis added).

Gauselman discloses a coin-operated gaming machine having rows of symbols which are cyclically rotated behind viewing windows (see, e.g., abstract of Gauselman). A covering means is arranged to be capable of covering one or more win lines in the rows of symbols, and may be activated to increase a player's chance of winning by reducing the number of win lines.¹ However, in sharp contrast to the game machine claimed by Applicant in amended independent claim 1, Gauselman does not disclose or suggest that a number of symbols displayed by the gaming machine may be changed according to a predetermined condition being met that is based on a betting operation input by a player.

Asdale discloses a gaming device capable of displaying symbols organized in symbol "stacks," in which hidden symbols are stacked beneath a displayed symbol (see, e.g., abstract of Asdale). A triggering event (i.e., for removing a currently displayed symbol to display a hidden symbol) may be automatically initiated (for example, in a timed sequence at the conclusion of a

game), or may be triggered separately with the appearance of a predetermined symbol or some other random event (see, e.g., paragraphs [0012], [0013] of Asdale). Like Gauselman, however, Asdale does not disclose or suggest Applicant's gaming machine as claimed in amended independent claim 1 providing a change in the number of game symbols displayed when a predetermined condition is met that is based on a betting operation input by a player.

Jaffe discloses a gaming machine having a visual display capable of displaying special symbols that randomly move to new positions in a symbol array (see, e.g., abstract of Jaffe). In one embodiment of a game provided by Jaffe's gaming machine, a bonus game may be earned in which the special symbols randomly move to new positions. Like Gauselman and Asdale, Jaffe does not disclose or suggest Applicant's gaming machine that changes a number of game symbols displayed when a predetermined condition is met that is based on a betting operation input by a player.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that each of Gauselman, Asdale and Jaffe fail to anticipate each and every element of Applicants' invention as claimed in amended independent claim 1, and that amended independent claims 1 is therefore allowable. Applicant reapplies the above-made argument in reference to amended independent claim 10, which effectively includes the elements of allowable independent claim 1 that have been distinguished over the cited references. For at least this reason, Applicant submits that amended independent claim 10 is also allowable. As dependent claims 3, 5 - 9, 10, 12 and 14 - 18 each depend either directly or indirectly from one of allowable claims 1 and 10, Applicants further submit that dependent claims 3, 5 - 9, 10, 12 and 14 - 18 are also allowable for at least this reason.

¹ Applicant notes that, counter to the disclosure provided in the abstract of Gauselman, such gaming machines more
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Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) of claims 1, 3, 5 - 9, 10, 12 and 14 - 18 be withdrawn.

II. New Claims

Applicant adds new claims 19 - 23. As each of new claims 19 - 23 depends from allowable independent claim 10, Applicant submits that new claims 19 - 23 are allowable for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below once he has reviewed the proposed amendment if the Examiner believes any issue can be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment.

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Respectfully submitted,

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